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CLIMATE CHANGE

The Value of Emissions Trading.
Webster, M., S. Paltsev and J. Reilly, MIT, February 2006
http://web.mit.edu/globalchange/www/MITJPSPGC_Rpt132.pdf

This paper estimates the value of international emissions trading, focusing attention on a here-to-fore neglected component: its value as a hedge against uncertainty. "We investigate the welfare gains of including emissions trading in the presence of uncertainty in economic growth rates, using both a partial equilibrium model based on marginal abatement cost curves and a computable general equilibrium model that allows consideration of the interaction of emissions trading with existing energy taxes and changes in terms of trade. We find that the hedge value of international trading is small relative to its value in reallocating emissions reductions when, as in the Kyoto Protocol, the burden-sharing scheme does not resemble a least-cost allocation"

The Agenda for Climate Action.
Pew Center on Global Climate Change, February 2006
http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/PCC%5FAgenda%5F2%2E08%2Epdf

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change released the first comprehensive plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. The Agenda for Climate Action identifies both broad and specific policies, combining recommendations on economy-wide mandatory emissions cuts, technology development, scientific research, energy supply, and adaptation with critical steps that can be taken in key sectors. The report is the culmination of a two-year effort that articulates a pragmatic course of action across all areas of the economy.

Climate Change White Paper. Design Elements of a Mandatory Market-Based Greenhouse Gas Regulatory System.
Sen. Pete V. Domenici and Sen. Jeff Bingaman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, February 2006
http://energy.senate.gov/public/_files/ClimateChangeWhitePaper.doc

"The purpose of this document is to lay out some of the key questions and design elements of a national greenhouse gas program in order to facilitate discussion and the

development of consensus around a specific bill. We recognize that there are many ways to structure such a regulatory program and that there are entirely different approaches that might include a carbon tax, technology incentives and voluntary programs, but we have limited our consideration here to "mandatory market-based systems" contemplated by the Sense of the Senate Resolution."

An International Policy Architecture for the Post-Kyoto Era.
Sheila M. Olmstead, Robert N. Stavins, AEI Brookings Joint Center, January 2006
http://www.aei-brookings.org/admin/authorpdfs/page.php?id=1244

The authors describe the basic features of a post-Kyoto international global climate agreement, which addresses three crucial questions: who, when, and how. The respective elements are: first, a means to ensure that key nations — industrialized and developing — are involved; second, an emphasis on an extended time path of action (employing a cost-effective pattern over time); and third, inclusion of market-based policy instruments.

The Economic Impacts of Climate Change: Evidence from Agricultural Output and Random Fluctuations in Weather.
Olivier Deschenes, Michael Greenstone, AEI Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, January 2006
http://www.aei-brookings.org/admin/authorpdfs/page.php?id=1237

"This paper measures the economic impact of climate change on US agricultural land by estimating the effect of the presumably random year-to-year variation in temperature and precipitation on agricultural profits. The analysis indicates that the predicted increases in temperature and precipitation will have virtually no effect on yields among the most important crops. Overall, the findings contradict the popular view that climate change will have substantial negative welfare consequences for the US agricultural sector."

WATER

Drinking Water: EPA Should Strengthen Ongoing Efforts to Ensure That Consumers Are Protected from Lead Contamination.
U.S. GAO, January 2006
http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-148

EPA's data suggest that the number of drinking water systems with elevated lead levels has dropped significantly since testing began in the early 1990s. However, EPA's database does not contain recent test results for over 30 percent of large and medium-sized community water systems and lacks data on the status of water systems' efforts to implement the lead rule for over 70 percent of all community systems, apparently because states have not met reporting requirements.

NUCLEAR FUELS

Safety and Security of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage: Public Report.
Committee on the Safety and Security of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage, National Research Council, February 2006
http://fermat.nap.edu/books/0309096472/html/

In response to a request from Congress, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Homeland Security sponsored a National Academies study to assess the safety and security risks of spent nuclear fuel stored in cooling pools and dry casks at commercial nuclear power plants. The information provided in this report examines the risks of terrorist attacks using these materials for a radiological dispersal device. It finds that successful terrorist attacks on spent fuel pools, though difficult, are possible. A propagating fire in a pool could release large amounts of radioactive material, but rearranging spent fuel in the pool during storage and providing emergency water spray systems would reduce the likelihood of a propagating fire even under severe damage conditions. The report suggests that additional studies are needed to better understand these risks.

Going the Distance? The Safe Transport of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste in the United States.
Committee on Transportation of Radioactive Waste, National Research Council, February 2006
http://newton.nap.edu/books/0309100046/html/

This report looks to provide an independent, objective, and authoritative analysis of the transportation of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste in the United States, while simultaneously examining risks and identifying current and future technical and societal concerns for such specialized transportation. It also gives comparisons between health and safety risks for transporting spent fuel and radioactive waste and other risks that confront members of society. Comparisons are provided for routine radiological transport, which has the potential to produce chronic radiation exposures and latent cancer, and severe accident risks, which have the potential to produce acute radiation sickness and death, as well as latent cancer.